THE Reconstructionist

Vol. IX. October 4, 1943 Tishri 5, 5704 No. 11

ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE NEW YEAR
—An Editorial

PERSONAL PIETY IN A SECULAR WORLD
By Ben Zion Bokser

THE ARRIVAL OF THE BROTHER
By Max Gruenewald

PALESTINIAN EDUCATORS IN SEARCH OF RELIGION
By Mordecai M. Kaplan

REALITIES AND VALUES

Dedicated to the advancement of Judaism as a religious civilization, to the upbuilding of Israel's ancient homeland, and to the furtherance of univeral freedom, justice and peace.

the Reconstructionist

is published bi-weekly for twenty consecutive issues, starting in October, by the Jewish Reconstructionist Foundation, Inc., 15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y. Reentered as second class matter October 3, 1935, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Chairman: Mordecai M. Kaplan
Associate Chairman: Ira Eisenstein
Managing Editor: Eugene Kohn

Associate Editors: Israel S. Chipkin, Samuel Dinin, Abraham G. Duker, Judith K. Eisenstein, Solomon Goldman, Jacob S. Golub, Bernard Heller, Philip Houtz, Samuel C. Kohs, Milton R. Konvitz, Theodore N. Lewis, Milton Steinberg.

Contributing Editors: Michael Alper, Nathan A. Barack, Shlomo Bardin, Morton M. Berman, Philip S. Bernstein, Asher Block, Samuel M. Blumenfield, Ben Zion Bokser, William J. Boxerman, Mortimer J. Cohen, Miriam R. Ephraim, Harry Essrig, Emanuel Gamoran, Judah I. Goldin, Robert Gordis, Emanuel Green, Max Kadushin, Louis M. Levitsky, Joshua Loth Liebman, I. D. Minzberg, Edward T. Sandrow, Simon Shetzer, Joshua Trachtenberg, Leo Trepp, Jacob J. Weinstein, Max Wiener.

EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

The Editorial Board is proud to add to its ranks, beginning with this issue, Professor Milton R. Konvitz, of New York University, and Dr. Jacob S. Golub, educator, author, and now on the staff of the Jewish Education Committee of New York. Dr. Golub was previously on our Contributing Board.

The roster of Contributing Editors has also been increased by the addition of Rabbi Leo Trepp and Rabbi Max Wiener, whose writings are familiar to readers of *The Reconstructionist*. Both these excellent men are recent arrivals from Germany. Rabbi Asher Block, Dr. Shlomo Bardin, and Dr. Louis M. Levitsky have also joined the Contributors; they were on the Editorial Board last year.

—o—

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

Dr. Ben Zion Bokser is spiritual head of the Forest Hills Jewish Center, in Long Island.

Rabbi Max Gruenewald was formerly Rabbi in Mannheim, Germany, and is now engaged in independent research in New York.

—o—

WITH ALL DUE MODESTY

From a student at the College of Jewish Studies, Chicago:

". . . Having first come in contact with your bi-weekly at the College of Jewish Studies in Chicago, I found a new and intriguing conception of Judaism in a modern world. . . ."

From a Chaplain overseas:

"*The Reconstructionist,* which reaches us regularly and which our men in the service are always happy to receive and read. . . . On their behalf let me express their profound appreciation for your increasing token of goodwill to the Jewish service men in Hawaii. . . ."

From a university professor:

". . . The Movement which seems to me both constructive and progressive . . . a real contribution to the making of Judaism a vital and living force in this generation, preserving the values of its great traditions with a message for the present age. . . ."

From a private in the army:

". . . I have read it (magazine) and found it both highly informative and thought-provoking. And now, when in the service, where money becomes valueless, except for the contribution it makes to new ideas and spirit, I should like to invest in your progressive vehicle.

AN OPPORTUNITY TO COLLABORATE!

A committee of the Editorial Board is interested in collecting prayer material for Sabbaths. They are especially desirous of gathering original prayers and meditations of a personal character.

The authors of material accepted for publication will be credited with authorship, and will receive remuneration.

For further details concerning subject matter, length of material, etc., communicate with Committee on Publications, c/o The Reconstructionist, 15 West 86th Street, New York 24, N. Y.

THE Reconstructionist

Vol. IX. October 4, 1943 Tishri 5, 5704 No. 11

ON THE THRESHOLD OF THE NEW YEAR

(*An Editorial*)

AS Jews approach Rosh Hashanah, they are impelled to pause and "take stock" of the events of the year, to look back upon the cycle of days just ended and judge them: Have they brought fulfillment or disappointment? Do they yield promise of a better future or do they presage disaster? But it is not only as Jews that they engage in such *din v'heshbon.* They judge as men and women, as Americans, as citizens of the world. In solemnity and awe, they review this torn and war-ridden world, searching for signs of hope, yet bravely prepared for painful and discouraging tokens.

Let us examine the current scene; what do the discerning observers see?

The International Scene

In international affairs, events have moved swiftly on the field of battle. From a weak defense, the United Nations have turned to a mighty and apparently irresistible offense. Military supplies have been produced at incredible rates. The American people wakened from its long lethargy and, with characteristic efficiency, turned the tide of battle. A little over a year ago, the Nazi panzer divisions were threatening Palestine. Since then, they have been thrown out of Africa, driven from the smaller Italian islands, swept out of Sicily, and forced from the south of the Italian mainland. The Italian government has surrendered, after ousting Mussolini. The Russians, in the meantime, have turned a Nazi offensive into a Nazi rout. The Japs too have been "shortening their lines according to plan."

There have been other victories besides those on the battlefield, and on the production front. The spirit of isolationism has fled. Public sentiment and the utterances of important personalities reveal that a new spirit has been infused into the American people. Men like Vice-President Wallace are, to be sure, far in the vanguard of current opinion; but, so far as international-mindedness is concerned, Secretary of State Hull is beginning to catch up. The House of Representatives has passed the Fulbright bill committing the United States to a program of post-war collaboration with the rest of the world. The remarkable popularity of Willkie's *One World* was more than a personal tribute to an engaging man. It was testimony to a growing awareness on the part of masses of people that the post-war world must become one *de jure* as well as *de facto.*

Encouraging, too, has been the slow but unmistakable growth of the belief that democracy is not merely a political designation. When the slogan, "Make the world safe for democracy," fired the imaginations of Americans during the first World War, democracy spelt only self-government and the franchise. Today, democracy means much more; freedom from want and freedom from fear have become integral to it. This war, for larger and larger numbers of men and women, is coming to be a war against poverty and hunger, as well as a war against dictatorship and tyranny. This war should usher in the era of the "common man," and of the fulfillment of his needs.

The year has brought these victories; but it has also brought defeats, and unfulfilled promises.

The very conception of "the century of the common man," stirring and hopeful as it sounds, is not thoroughly understood, even by most who hold it. They rightly perceive that, in the days to come, men are going to act in masses, and that the weight of these masses will count; that the needs and wants of the "little man," backed by the new consciousness of power which he possesses, will not be denied, or put off with a shrug. But they do not yet realize that the problem of the common man is not solved merely by his solidarity with other "common" men, or by his blind demand for food and shelter. Nazism and communism answered that demand—at the cost of freedom. The real problem is to act *en masse,* without falling victim to *mass* psychology. The task is to stand together—but to think separately, to react as individuals, to choose, to discriminate.

The New Deal for the world will be a synthesis of the one and the many, the cooperation of all the little men and the individualization of each. This is a principle for which it is good to fight, for it holds out the true promise of a better world. This principle, unfortunately, is still unarticulated. It has not yet found its Karl Marx.

Because the principle of a New Deal for mankind is not yet clearly conceived, a discrepancy exists between avowed purposes and prevailing methods. The purpose of internationalism is professed—but the methods are still the methods of old-fashioned diplomacy. There is constant talk of "alliances," between the United States and Great Britain, between the four leading powers, etc. The old type imperialism is still enthroned. Federalism, and such plans as " Union Now," have been shoved into the background. And although many will rejoice that the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union have arranged a joint conference (indicating improvement in these relations), conferences of this kind are poor substitutes for the participation *by all nations,* large and small, in an effort to unite for peace and universal prosperity.

The American Scene

On the home-front the forces of reaction have won nearly every battle in which they were engaged. In Congress the coalition of Republicans and the representatives of the eight Southern poll-tax States have had their way time and again. Some of them merely played politics; most of them, however, were bent on wrecking the New Deal agencies that are associated with a program of social reform. A mood of apathy is pervasive throughout the country; and this is the worst sign of all. Hardly a voice was raised to protest against, or even bemoan, the following major defeats of liberalism through reaction in Congress:

1. *The crippling of the Farm Security Administration.* Set up in 1937, the FSA constituted a brave adventure in social action. Its purpose was to aid low-income rural families to help themselves by

making money available for loans and grants and by providing trained personnel to work with individual families. A million families have received small loans for farm operations and household maintenance; more than 5,000 tenant purchase loans have been made to qualified tenants, share-croppers and farm laborers; over a half million persons have been able to obtain medical care at a cost they could afford to pay; cooperative community facilities and services, provided by FSA, have reached over 200,000 families; it has established over sixty camps for migrants. This program of notable achievement will now be cut short.

2. *The abolition of the National Youth Administration.* Established in 1935, the NYA successfully followed its program of training young people for employment by means of productive work projects. Especially notable was its student work program for high school and college students, which extended equal educational opportunities through the medium of work experience projects. NYA's program of health and physical education, vocational guidance and counseling and the administration of its activities without the least trace of racial or religious prejudice have constituted major achievements of the Roosevelt Administration. The abolition of the NYA removes from the scene one of the most valued social agencies.

3. *The abolition of the National Resources Planning Board.* One of the least advertised of agencies, its contribution to the American people has been one of the most notable. Headed by the President's uncle, Frederick Delano, one of the country's pioneer planners, the NRPB did not consider its program as one limited to physical planning. Its contributions to the field of economic and social planning; its interest in human as well as in natural resources; its researches in the problems of urban life; the stimulation it gave to the creation of state, city and regional planning agencies (it assisted in the creation of state planning agencies in every state of the Union except Delaware, which decided to leave its planning to the du Ponts); its many books and monographs; its outline of a broadened social security plan for post-war days—these accomplishments will not be forgotten. The NRPB is needed more now than ever before; the nation is poorer without it.

4. *Passage of the Smith-Connally War Labor Disputes Law.* Although the time lost by strikes in the first eight months of 1942 was only one-fifth of the time lost in the same period in 1941; although the time lost by strikes was only one-tenth the time lost by sickness; although the strikes in 1942 were less numerous than they were in 1917 or 1918, and were smaller and shorter—Congress passed the most stringent anti-strike measure ever adopted in this country. Its practical effect as a restraint on labor will probably be negligible, for the record of labor during the war shows that labor is sufficiently disciplined to restrain itself; yet passage of the act is noteworthy because it shows the temper of Congress and its reactionary tendencies.

5. *Failure to pass the anti-poll-tax bill and the bill to outlaw lynching.* Although the former passed in the House of Representatives, it is dead in the Senate; the latter bill is still in the House. Lynching of Negroes in the South—America's greatest shame—still takes place. The lynching of Cellos Harrison in Florida and the lynching in Sikestown, Missouri, to mention only two instances, left Congress unmoved, as though these things had happened on the other side of the moon.

6. *Failure to repeal the Chinese Exclusion Act.* Since 1882 the Chinese people have been suffering from the insult of exclusion. We refer to China as our noble ally, we pay all sorts of honor to China's First Lady when she visits our shores, but

we would not repeal an act which would mean a maximum of 103 Chinese immigrants annually. The failure to repeal this unjust Act is due to the time-worn partnership of West Coast and Southern representatives on all measures affecting race relations.

7. *Sabotage of the OPA.* While the National War Labor Board has been succeeding in holding down wage increases, fulfilling its part in the anti-inflation program, the OPA, mainly because of obstruction from Congress, has not done as good a job in holding down prices of commodities, with the result that there is a great deal of inflation, with the wage earners the chief sufferers.

Beside these reactionary acts of Congress, the forces of reaction expressed themselves in race riots in Beaumont, Detroit and other cities, and widespread discrimination against the Negroes in the armed forces (which our white soldiers and sailors have carried with them even to England and Africa).

But there have been victories on the home-front too. American labor has supported the New Deal more enthusiastically. Americans of all classes have begun to assume that such provisions as social security, old-age pensions and similar types of social insurance must be an organic part of the future set-up. Society's responsibility for those who cannot help themselves has taken on something of the stature of an accepted postulate. Already plans are under way for taking adequate care of the demobilized soldiers after the war. The President's message on that theme was indicative of the resolve never to return to the old days when those who suffered from the dislocations of the economy were forced to shift for themselves.

The Jewish Scene

The Jewish scene is tragic to contemplate. European Jewry suffered during the past year indescribable horror. The mind cannot even conceive the torture, unless it be a Nazi mind. Millions of Jews have been wiped out.

And the world has not yet raised its hand to act. Voices have been heard, offering sympathy. But no rescue work has been done. No gates are opened. In Bermuda, a conference was held. Vague promises issued from it, nothing more. The failure of the nations to take action has been a profound shock to Jews, and to some Gentiles. The indifference, the callousness, the reluctance to hear the cries of the dying and the maimed have filled many with strange forebodings, for the treatment of Jews has become, in the minds of millions, the barometer of national and international decency and integrity.

If the Jews are victimized by the policy of appeasement represented by the White Paper, what can other small nations look forward to from the appeasers? If schemes like the Palestine post-war reconstruction plan are devised against the Jews, what can other undeveloped countries expect from the great Powers?

To the endless tale of suffering and to the unanswered cries for help may be added, on the dark side of the Jewish picture, the startling growth of native fascist and anti-Semitic groups in the United States. Directly after Pearl Harbor, anti-Semitism took a sharp dive. Gradually, the hate-mongers regained their equilibrium. Now they are sailing high again.

The darkness, however, is not altogether unrelieved. Some rays of hope have penetrated the gloom. Jews are drawing close together. The American Jewish Conference, held recently, was a stirring demonstration of unity in the ranks. Even the small dissident minority still resisting the logic of Zionism preferred to remain within the Conference rather than withdraw. Democratic procedures marked the selection of the five hundred delegates to the Conference, and now American Israel

REALITIES AND VALUES

FAR TOO LITTLE ATTENTION has been given in the Anglo-Jewish press to the resolutions adopted at the American Jewish Conference touching upon the need for spiritual reconstruction. True, the agenda dealt only with rescue, rehabilitation and Palestine. Fortunately, however, there were spiritually sensitive men and women at the Conference who realized that all efforts at rebuilding the world involved "the rehabilitation of the conscience of mankind." In their Declaration of Faith, approved by the entire Conference at the closing session, they stated, "We call upon members of the American Jewish community to strengthen their commitments to the synagogue and the agencies of Jewish culture. . . ." We welcome these words, not only because of their intrinsic importance, but also because they represent the beginnings of a concern on the part of the Conference with Jewish morale at home.

▼

GOV. DWIGHT H. GREEN, OF Illinois, has appointed a commission of fourteen to "promote better race relations in the state." It has already "undertaken a long-term survey of interracial problems with the view to formulating definite recommendations." The research staff of the State Administration at Springfield has been engaged "for the assembling of as full information as can be obtained concerning race disturbances." This is good news, indeed. At last, forward looking government officials are realizing that race relations are as much the problem of the state as are education and health. When groups interested in good will tackle the problem, they usually bring to it earnestness and sincerity—but little more. When government undertakes the job, there is likelihood that action may be taken ultimately to outlaw anti-Semitism, race riots and vicious propaganda. The Illinois commission consists of an equal number of blacks and whites; and its program includes an investigation of housing, employment and other areas of possible friction. We look forward with keen interest to its findings.

▼

THE ARMY OF THE UNITED States is going to get an education. So it appears from the announcements that Gen. Osborne, Col. Spaulding and Herbert Agar are launching a new program of discussion groups at the army camps, under official auspices. Our boys are certainly the best equipped—physically and militarily. Are they, however, so well equipped spiritually and intellectually? Do they know what this war is about? Are they aware of what they are fighting for? Probably very few understand the issues involved. Certainly, those soldiers who have carried their anti-Semitism and race prejudices with them into the army cannot possibly realize how close they are to the enemy in their thinking. We hear that the Red Army, the Chinese and the British armies have been conducting educational programs for the men for a long time. Their studies have certainly not interfered with their efficiency. On the contrary, a great deal of their verve must certainly be traced to their consciousness of purpose. We hope the boys get a good, stiff course. It will make them better soldiers, and better Americans.

---

can speak with one voice, with none to challenge its right to be heard.

Israel, united upon a program for the rescue and rehabilitation of European Jewry, and for the establishment of a Jewish Commonwealth in Palestine, is prepared to lay before the world its honorable claims. May the acknowledgment of these claims by the victorious United Nations give proof of their determination to establish a world order based on justice and peace for all.

Dr. Israel Goldstein assumes the presidency of the Zionist Organization at a time when American Jewry is looking to that organization for leadership as never before. It must be encouraging to him, on assuming his duties, to know that he has the support of an organization which has achieved genuine unity and that he enjoys the confidence of its rank and file, a confidence well earned by his achievements as chairman of the Jewish National Fund in America. The recent Zionist convention had the happy distinction of being totally free from the partisan squabbles that had for so many years bedeviled Zionist activity. The patience, perseverance and single-heartedness of the outgoing president, Judge Louis Levinthal must largely be credited with thus having cleared the Zionist deck for action. The acceptance by Dr. Abba Hillel Silver of the co-chairmanship, together with Dr. Stephen S. Wise, of the Emergency Committee and the chairmanship of its Executive Committee, places the difficult task of political leadership in the hands of a bold, imaginative, and persuasive personality. To these leaders the Zionist membership and, indeed, American Jewry look with confidence.

▼

Since the last issue of our magazine in the early summer, American Jewry has suffered the loss of two eminent personalities in different fields of service. Professor Ismar Elbogen, scholar and historian, shortly before his death, had completed in manuscript a history of the Jews from 1840 to 1940—the period not included in Graetz's great classic—which will be published by the Jewish Publication Society. Dr. Elbogen's contribution to the history of the Jewish Liturgy is particularly notable. Such studies, showing how the Jews in every age expressed the religious sentiments evoked by their experience in forms of public worship, are of great value. They encourage us to make our own public worship meaningful and impressive—a major objective of Reconstructionism.

▼

The other great loss which we wish reverently to record is that of Judge Julian W. Mack. His name will be forever associated with that of Justice Brandeis, with whom he collaborated in Zionist work during the critical and heroic period of the first World War and whom he succeeded as President of the Zionist Organization. He presided over the American Jewish Congress that played so important a part in securing the recognition of Palestine as the Jewish National Home and the recognition of Jewish group rights in the new states established by the Versailles Treaty. All who rejoice in the unity and self-respect achieved through the American Jewish Conference have reason to be grateful to the memory of Judge Mack for his achievements in the same cause.

▼

One of the distressing features of the disturbances between Negroes and whites is that rioting by Negroes often takes an anti-Semitic turn. Jews should realize that this is not so much the fault of the Negroes as of those who seek to profit by diverting the resentment of all oppressed elements from their oppressers by getting them to fight among themselves. Intelligent Jews will not be discouraged by this phenomenon from actively opposing discrimination against the Negro in our political, social and cultural life. It is heartening, therefore, to see that intelligent Negro leadership is equally alert to the evils of anti-Semitism. The People's Voice, a Negro publication edited by Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., is publishing a series of forcibly written articles by Rev. Ben Richardson, Assistant Minister of the Abyssinian Baptist Church of New York City, exposing the evils of anti-Semitism and dispelling anti-Jewish prejudice.

Personal Piety in a Secular World

By BEN ZION BOKSER

The Nature of Piety

PIETY is one of the choicest fruits of the religious life. When faith has done its work and persuaded man that beyond him lies a reality which gives meaning to and holds out the promise of fulfillment for his life, there comes over him a mood of joyous acceptance. His soul in all its inwardness reaches out to salute that reality and he seeks, in word and symbol, to give dramatic affirmation of his attachment to it. Those affirmations, together with the emotions and ideas in which they are grounded, constitute piety.

Piety varies with the character of the reality in which one finds life's worth to reside. But all piety is orientated to some truth, even though it may be partial, for its validity is attested by the experience of some soul that expressed through it the discovery of life's meaning. All piety is, by the same token, orientated to a limited truth, a limitation imposed by the finitude of the human mind in truly apprehending the sources of life's worth, which are ultimately located in the infinite.

Piety has its ebb and flow, corresponding to the ebb and flow of the human spirit that creates it. It will grow with the enlargement of man's vision of the reality beyond him that vindicates his life. It will grow with the emergence of original spirits who will create new forms for adorning the old visions. On the other hand, piety is likewise subject to corrosion and decline, in consequence of a contraction in the vision it celebrates or through the sheer neglect of its exercise.

The rewards of piety are great indeed. When a person knows that he is not alone and is not a chance vibration of matter upon this planet, but that, behind himself, there are realities that sustain and nurture him, and endow his existence with worth, he experiences a sense of inner power, and self-assurance. There is a joy in his acceptance of the world, which does not blind him to its accidents but persists despite them. Even death comes serenely to the pious, for it is vindicated by the grace of existence and the purpose to which one's life has contributed. When this vision declines, one must either find one's existence self-justifying or curse life as evil. Considering the precariousness of life and the smallness of the human person, it is difficult long to maintain the mood of life's self-justification. In the end, the heretic pays the toll of his heresy in cynicism.

Character of Jewish Piety

Jewish tradition has developed its own characteristic mood and discipline of piety. At every turn it saw man surrounded by forces that sustain and ennoble existence. The majesty and utility of nature, the glories of friendship and love, the joys of study, the inspiration of contact with wise men, the privilege of divine communion, the blessings of civilization, the vision and fortitude of one's own nature—these and a host of other goods were available in a variety of manifestations to make life livable, and, indeed, to make it a triumphant enterprise. Judaism, moreover, saw these goods not as isolated phenomena selected by man at random, from an environment that might be indifferent to him, but as integrally related to one another and to the rest of the cosmos, and divinely ordained to serve their life-enhancing mission.

The teachers of Jewish tradition never

undertook to define the divine essence. The nature of God, they realized, transcends all human capacities to know and to communicate. But they felt God as vividly real because they had experienced the beneficent manifestations of divine providence. As one knows of the robin's presence in the tree top not by seeing him, but by hearing his song, so the teachers of Judaism knew of the divine presence,—they had heard the divine song from all the tree tops of creation.

Thus far knowledge and faith. But there also came to our people that which is greater than knowledge and greater than faith—piety.

To trace the origin and development of Jewish piety would require a long and intricate investigation. But, functionally, Jewish piety is all of one order—the response of the Jewish soul to the source from which it derives its life and the means as well as the meaning of its existence. It is the institution by which Jewish tradition called man to a deeper awareness of the life-sustaining forces around him. It asked him to offer acknowledgement to the divine providence of which all these forces are but fragmentary manifestations. We are asked to bless God on partaking of food, on enjoying a fragrant odor, on beholding a tree with a new garb of green in spring, on reunion with a friend, on moving into a new home, on meeting a wise man, on beginning and concluding a session of study, on beholding the sea, on arising each morning from the night's slumber, on recovery from sickness, on the arrival of a new-born child. We likewise celebrate the providence of God as manifest in the blessings we share by our fellowship in Israel, above all, in the enjoyment of the most precious of all its possessions, the Torah. Sincerely enacted, these exercises of piety are the soul's salute to the source from which its noblest blessings flow.

The molders of Jewish tradition did not allow this development to take place without guidance and order. For piety is a social no less than an individual phenomenon. It is an individual phenomenon in the sense that its roots as well as its fruits have their final being in individual experience. It is, however, social because man is social, and the resources of group life are among the most important of the life-sustaining forces that inspire the mood of piety. The expression of the mood of piety, moreover, is a social as well as a personal manifestation. The masses cannot create their own instruments for articulating that mood, no matter how profoundly they feel it. They are dependent upon their more gifted members to coin the word, to create the rhythm, to improvise the melody. The masses respond to these creations and make them their own by adoption. Jewish tradition, therefore, placed piety, insofar as it is a social process, under the same principles of order by which it sought to govern the social process generally—the realm of law. The law of piety left an area of freedom within which individual discretion remained sovereign, but it circumscribed that freedom by a realm of law in which individual discretion was to be guided by the discretion of the religious authorities. And like all law, the law of piety provided for the means of its own development, through legislation and interpretation. The inclusion of piety in law did not make for a cessation of its growth. It changed undisciplned growth into ordered development.

The varied discipline of Jewish piety has greatly enriched Jewish life, esthetically and morally. The mood of piety became the inspiration for fruitful artistic enterprises with which sensitive men sought to adorn it. Poetry, vocal and instrumental music, and certain types of dramatic performance took that deep awareness of life's meaning which is the

ideal of piety as their motif, seeking to celebrate and to interpret it for all men. The contribution that all this development made for the esthetic enrichment of Jewish life is incalculable. It gave us the Psalms, much of the poetry of Judah Halevi and Ibn Gabirol, the Temple music and *hazanut*. It gave us the drama of ritual and festival celebrations, a treasury of esthetics, which became part of the active religious life of all Jewry in the home and in the synagogue.

The system of Jewish piety, insofar as it celebrated, among other things, the Torah, became an important cultural and moral force among the Jewish people. It stimulated the Torah's study and popularized its great moral teachings. The *mitzvot* were a form of learning by doing, embodying the best pedagogic procedures in the communication of a great heritage. Even more important, perhaps, was the fact that Jewish piety dramatized to the Jew the sense of his unique role in history. He might suffer persecution and martyrdom, but his system of piety reinforced for him a faith in the transcendant importance of the Jewish people. Even as the Greek hero, Aeneas, could stand up against a cruel fate because he was ever the "pious Aeneas," conscious of a noble destiny that vindicated his suffering, so the Jew was fortified in facing his fate. He saw his suffering in a context of convictions that made them incidental to a great fulfillment. And the price exacted was justified by the prize earned.

The Decline in Piety

The modern Jewish scene points to a tragic decline in the art of Jewish piety. The exercise of piety is being neglected by a great number of Jews. The consequences that must follow in the wake of such a decline are apparent everywhere. Jews are unhappy in their Judaism and are in rebellion against their destiny. When he was deeply stirred by the mood of piety, the Jew affirmed joyously the privilege of Jewish life. "How happy are we, how goodly is our portion, how pleasant our lot, and how comely is our heritage!" runs the refrain in the liturgy of the traditional prayerbook, and the Jew repeated it with fervor. The modern Jew feels that his lot is the most tragic in the modern world, and that life has somehow singled him out for unmitigated suffering.

The decline in piety is one of the concomitants of the predominantly secular character of the modern world. We may define a culture as secular when it tends to appraise human life as self-sufficient and self-justifying, without regarding any transcendant sources as the locus of its worth. A variety of circumstances are responsible for the secular trends of modern culture. One of these is the phenomenal social and economic transformation of the world consequent upon revolutionary advances in technological knowledge which characterized the 19th and early 20th centuries. This fostered the illusion that man is all-powerful, that he makes and unmakes his own world of values. Did not the Marxists generalize this illusion into a dogma, that all value is created by man who labors with hand and brain? Men were so impressed with what the individual could do in rendering his own life meaningful that some even renounced the need of any organized state and proclaimed the self-sufficiency of the individual. The state was looked upon as an enemy and progress was regarded as a process of the individual's liberation from group tyranny. This dogma of progress also led to a rebellion against tradition. Impressed by brilliant achievements of their own age, men looked back with contempt upon the petty dreams and triumphs of the "ancients." The same men who developed the labor theory of value also sang of their forthcoming libera-

tion from tradition, which they characterized as "chains" that bound them.

The individual by himself is hollow enough, and he who has surrendered all else except his own precious little self, has surrendered that too. For reasons of intrinsic self-inadequacy no less than for economic advantages, 19th century man compromised his individualism. Disillusioned with individualism, some embraced the nation and sought to find personal worth by identification with the national community. Others embraced a social class cutting across national frontiers, whose interests, struggles and triumphs were to give meaning and worth to the individual. But neither saw the necessity of looking for a source of value beyond the actual processes of life itself.

Facilitating this secularization of culture was the increasingly urban character of modern life. Surrounded by machines and various artifices of an industrial urban society, man was increasingly blind to the world which he had not made. Had he remained close to the soil, he would have felt what all who live close to nature ever feel—that the sources of man's blessing transcend his handiwork. The poetry of sun and moon and stars, the mystery of the birth and growth of each flower, each blade of grass, and each sheaf of grain speak eloquently of the glory of God "who each day forever renews in His goodness the work of creation." But the child of the factories did not see this. Indeed, prosaic men of the cities even generalized their blindness into a cosmic theory. Impressed with the greatness of the machine, they declared the cosmos itself and all life to be a machine constituted solely of moving matter in certain configurations of space and time.

Finally, religion itself was presented as a human creation. Having identified the human instrumentality in the literary composition of the Torah, men drew the generalization that the Torah was the work of human hands and that it recorded the varying cultural notions of the men who composed it. Having observed a shift in man's conception of God in accordance with the shift in his general level of culture, men generalized that we make God in our own image. The divine "push" behind all this development was ignored. God became the reflection rather than the cause of man's growth. Divine providence had become a dispensable hypothesis.

Supporting the trend to secularization, too, was the obscuring of divine providence by the problem of evil, accentuated in our day by an iniquitous world order which is forever releasing forces that dehumanize life. The sense of a transcendent source of human worth, of a God who supports the march of life toward nobler realizations, has been dimmed among men who have experienced the agonies of social wrong, of starvation in the midst of plenty, of racial and religious bigotry, of periodic mass-slaughter in the cataclysms of recurring war. There have been, indeed, social wrongs in the past, but what has made these wrongs of our day more glaring is that they have persisted despite our advanced technological resources, by which we could have produced universal abundance. The modern victim of our social wrongs, too, is less willing to bear his fate with resignation because the popularization of knowledge and the achievement of some of the social gains of the machine age have broadened his horizon and given him a new sense of his own rights and of his own powers. Moreover, because organized religion, in some of its manifestations, has in specific instances condoned the abuses of our world order, some of the most sensitive critics of our society have condemned religion as an enemy of the people; and they have denounced acts of piety as an opiate by which the masses of mankind were being kept in lethargic acquiescence to

their own degradation. From the point of view of the religious life, the very cataclysm of war is the work of divine providence that is destroying the imperfect world order so as to build it over on more perfect foundations. And when the religious man hails his God as the redeemer of his life, he does so for the very fact that God does not permit the world to stagnate in its injustice, that He inspires men to rise against tyranny and wrong, that He smites the world in order to heal it of its moral ills. But men have not always seen this. They have seen the bare facts of life's frustrations, and judging the world against the background of these frustrations, they abandoned faith in divine providence. Without a vital faith in divine providence the acts of piety become futile and pointless gestures.

This process of secularization has affected adversely all types of piety. But it has had its most disastrous effects on Jewish life. For the Jews have been in the very maelstrom of the development of our industrial economy. Their urbanization, their alienation from nature, has been more pronounced. Their status as a religious minority has aggravated matters, too. Their suffering at the hands of dehumanizing forces of our present world order has been particularly tragic. The struggle for civic rights and for national rehabilitation in Palestine have added to the illusion that salvation is wholly man-made. Each petty triumph in the quest for political emancipation, each inch of soil reclaimed for resettlement in Palestine, has strengthened the conviction that what thwarts life is man-made and what liberates it is likewise man-made.

The Jewish people has suffered from the impact of these forces above all because its religious leadership proved inept. The Russo-Polish sector of Jewish religious leadership has ignored the challenge altogether. In the Western World, there have been attempts to grapple with the problem, but they have proved inadequate. Reform Judaism was corrupted by Christian antinomianism and called upon Jews to cultivate the feeling of piety while it undermined all reverense for organizational forms. Orthodoxy, with greater wisdom, demanded the retention of discipline, but it negated the principle that piety is a growing phenomenon. It called upon men to preserve the past and to ignore the claims of new life.

Nationalism No Substitute for Piety

Attempts have been made to reconstruct the concept of piety on a naturalistic basis. George Santayana defined piety as "man's reverent attachment to the sources of his being and the steadying of his life by that attachment." But what are, for him, the true sources of man's being? Not a reality beyond human life, but the incidents of life itself. "The true objects of piety," he declared, "are, of course, those on which life and its interests really depend: parents first, then family, ancestors, and country; finally humanity at large and the whole natural cosmos."

Similar reconstructions have been suggested in Judaism. Jewish piety, insofar as it is specifically Jewish, is built on a national root, because Jewish tradition had seen in the group a medium whereby God performed His beneficent purposes in history. Israel's life was a divinely chosen instrument for the operations of providence, and the individual Jew drew meaning for his own private life from his identification with Israel. The *mitzvot* were particularistic in the sense that they emerged within a particular group but they were universal in their reference. But in our day, many Jews, repudiating belief in a transcendant God who might endow Israel's life with meaning, have proclaimed Israel itself the object of Jew-

ish piety. As one Jewish writer put it, under the impact of modern cultural trends "Jewish allegiance either tends to be discarded or the Jewish people itself, without any sanctification through a Covenant, becomes the object of faith and veneration." (Werner J. Cahnman, "Reflections on Sociology of the Jews," in *Jewish Frontier,* April, 1943, p. 14)

In this conception, Jewish national life was self-justifying. Jewish holidays were reduced to the level of patriotic celebrations. Jewish heroes became nationalist rather than religious personalities. Jewish history was rewritten, eliminating the continued reference to divine providence and basing all developments instead on the naturalistic laws of cause and consequence. Jewish cultural creations were attributed to the "national genius" of the Jewish people. The secular Zionist and various folkist interpretations of Jewish destiny (e. g. those of Prilutzki and Dubnow) offered themselves as substitutes for the religious interpretation of Jewish tradition.

The secularist motivation for any system of piety, particularly of Jewish piety, has proven inadequate. It proclaims the national community as a self-sufficient enterprise of human life, that endows individual existence with significance without itself being dependent on other sources for significance. It thereby encourages a type of nationalism that has proven a destructive force in the modern world. And sensitive men are unwilling to revere any nation as a final and supreme good. Jewish group life, moreover, cannot recommend itself as a self-sufficient source of worth and thus an object of piety since the modern Jewish group is under constant challenge. A pious man will readily forfeit his life if he finds his sacrifice vindicated by a transcendent purpose with which his sacrifice may be linked. But an empirical appraisal of Jewish status can point to little that is glorious to make the sacrifice it demands a willing tribute. The traditionalist Jew sacrificed readily, for he went beyond the empirical facts of Jewish status. He suffered as the suffering "servant of the Lord," and his suffering was incidental to the performance of his vocation. As a soldier who feels not bitterness, but a sense of privilege, in his selection for a particularly hazardous assignment, so the Jew accepted his status joyously, despite hardships. The contemporary lament of Jewry that the Jewish destiny is a tragic handicap is not so much a reflection on Jewish destiny, as on the decline of Jewish faith, of the conviction that whatever hardships its destiny involved, the Jewish people served as the instrument of a great purpose which would make all things good in the end.

How to Revive Jewish Piety

The present crisis in Jewish piety is, in other words, due only in part to inadequacies in the system of Jewish piety itself. Surely certain elements of Jewish piety require adaptation and reformulation to render them more relevant to the needs of modern life. Such reformulations are a common phenomenon in Jewish tradition; and Jewish tradition has the principles and procedures by which they can be effected in our day. The hour indeed calls upon the teachers of contemporary Judaism to undertake this task of reformulation and adaptation. To do so is not to destroy but to fulfill the Law.

The revolt against piety on the part of so many modern Jews is, however, rooted in more serious considerations. A lover will not find it burdensome to continue endlessly to reiterate endearments to the object of his affections. He will tire when his love has waned. And there will be no renewal of Jewish piety till there has been a renewal of Jewish faith in a God who transcends man and nature and

history and endows each with meaning and purpose. The crux of this renewal will be the faith in the vocation of Israel, for unless we see in Jewish destiny a unique purposefulness, we shall not have the inspiration to carry on with a distinctive group life. When that faith has done its work, and men have been persuaded anew of its power, they will once more seek to adorn it in varied acts of piety, some of them handed down by tradition and others original.

In attempting to foster a revival of Jewish piety, the task which faces us is manifold. We must reformulate the demands of Jewish law for our day, and, where necessary, adapt the old form to the claims of new life. We must restate the meaning of our religious faith in terms of the prevailing usages of speech and thought, but repudiate unequivocally the errors of secularism which infest our current culture. The newer experiences of divine beneficence to which our own lives bear witness must likewise be given a place in the system of Jewish piety. We must grapple with the problems of the social order, and take part in the struggles of all men for liberty and peace, and of our people for civic equality and for the reclamation of Palestine. But we must ground our approach to all these problems in the religious ideology of Judaism so that they shall not obscure but illustrate and reinforce the thesis of our faith in the divine order. And we must call on men to offer living testimony to that faith in the eternal language of religion, piety.

An appraisal of the contemporary Jewish scene does not show very much promise for such a development. What agitates the Jewish scene today, are the problems of politics and sociology, not of piety and theology. But nature abhors a vacuum, including the vacuum of faith. And men who have no faith cannot long press on with the tasks of existence. Their very unhappiness is part of the divine providence which prods them to repentance. And the necessities of living, the persistent prodding of God as He goads them through that unhappiness which is the result of cynicism, will eventually force upon them the claims of this religious revival. "I shall not die but live and declare the works of the Lord," exclaimed the Psalmist when grappling with the problems that usually alienate men from God. His affirmation we, too, must ultimately make. Alienation from God spells loneliness, stagnation and death. And when men refuse to die, they must finally turn to Him who is the source and the song of all existence. In declaring the works of the Lord, we shall find the secret of abiding life.

The Arrival of the Brother

By MAX GRUENEWALD

THE enormous change through which the Jewry of our day is passing is bound to show in our approach to history. This can be readily seen, for instance, in Baron's new work on the Jewish Community, both in the very subject he chooses and even more in the fact that, for the first time, so much study is being applied to a problem which in other works on general Jewish history occupies only the sidelines—the problem of the relation between the immigrant and the resident Jew.

There are, of course, several features in the relation between newcomer and resident which, at least in their surface manifestations, belong to the internal conflicts of all peoples. For instance, there is nothing specifically Jewish about the Jewish Lithuanian Council of the 16th century

forbidding or restricting immigration for fear of competition. Antagonisms like those between Palestinian and Babylonian Jews or Sephardim and Ashkenazim can be observed in other peoples as well, especially in those that have not achieved a lasting national or geopolitical solution of their problems. There is nothing specifically Jewish about their struggles for precedence and superiority and the labelling of disliked groups with disparaging terms, although the issues involved are solely Jewish. That Jewish migrants cling jealously to their customs and forms of worship, thus guarding their identity and preserving their ways of life against disintegrating tendencies—this too has its parallels in other tribes, nations and creeds.

On the other hand, nowhere do we find anything comparable to the institution of redemption of prisoners and slaves. The exemption of the scholar from the *herem hayishuv* (the restriction on settlement of foreign Jews in the community) is another trait that, insofar as it results from the high esteem for the erudite man, is characteristic of the Jews only.

Contrast Between Modern and Medieval Attitudes

There is a sharp contrast between the Middle Ages and modern times in the attitude of immigrant and resident toward each other. During the medieval times every Jew was a potential migrant. This was true even of those Jews who lived in the same country for generations. "Even their resting is called moving." Both resident and immigrant live in exile, with the *Shekinah* sharing, as it were, in their wandering. Both pray for redemption. They breathe in the same rhythm of life, have the same concepts of sin and atonement, one expression of which is self-imposed exile. A common fate binds them together and transcends the experience of the individual, his wants and hopes.

Through the long dark period the Jew moves on as an integrated unbroken being. The split personality, so frequent and unwholesome a spectacle in our times, does not occur except in the case of a few skeptics at the end of the Middle Ages and among the Marranos. Incidentally, it is the vulnerable status of the Marranos that causes the Jews of Rome to object to the immigration of Spanish Jews. They are afraid the persecution of relapsing Marranos might endanger their security and compromise their own unstable position.

There is no need to enlarge on the changes in Jewish life wrought by the Emancipation. They affect the attitude of the resident-citizen toward the immigrant, the more so as nationalism increases its demands upon the former. He does not withhold his sympathy and assistance, but, at the same time, he cannot help but feel slightly disturbed, and as a citizen he regards his foreign brother as a political liability. His attitude can be described as ambivalence, as a constant change from sympathy for the victim of persecution to uneasiness about the newcomer who, by the very fact of his arrival, proves that all is not too well with Jewry. Henceforth all his grievances and resentments, both old and recent, are but reflections of the conflict described above.

The treatment extended to the newcomer varies with the country and the circumstances. Thus we find friendliness and outright neglect, denial to the immigrant of social and religious rights and attempts to rush him into readjustment. Altogether the resident's behavior is far from the healthy rule which the Chinese language puts in one word, *Kiao*: "Meet the immigrant as an ordinary human being. Do not permit him to develop a superiority complex, do not permit your-

self to develop in him an inferiority complex."

The Problem from the Immigrant's Viewpoint

What aggravates the problem in our times is that the immigrant thinks of himself as an individual, is admitted to the new country as an individual, free to go and to choose. But in the end he finds himself belonging to a group and sometimes judged by its merits or faults. Moreover, his group is a distinct minority possessing many of the characteristics which the Jews encounter in their dealings with the outside world. The immigrant's reaction also is often determined by his belonging to a minority, both when he stubbornly clings to it and when he tries to escape from his own circle and the whole Jewish people into the anonymity of a citizen-at-large. Frequently his own home becomes the scene of the conflict, when he sees, with pride, envy and fear, how his children drift away from him.

The resident Jew meets his foreign brother only on the boat and then on whatever occasions social life and business might provide. The persecuted Jew, however, feels the presence of his brother while he is still languishing for freedom and waiting for his deliverance. In the absence of a central Jewish authority, it is the established native who through his personal initiative and through philanthropic enterprises influences the course and, to some extent, the volume of the influx of immigrants. There are a good many things that, speaking broadly, belong to the chapter of the arrival of the brother: the transportation of many thousands of Jews to other countries, the policy of Jewish organizations with regard to agricultural settlements, for instance, in South America; the opening of new stretches of land for the purpose of settlement or temporary refuge; and, finally, the attitude taken by the resident Jew in the fight of the immigrant for the recognition of his loyalty. All this will be of interest to the historian; not only the facts and figures involved but also the motives behind the success and failures.

The Problem in Palestine

The problem, thus outlined, is not confined to the Diaspora. It appears in Palestine as well and assumes there even more vehement forms. The integration of the various Jewish sections into one unified body after long periods of alienation is no simple process and no one can expect it to be achieved in one generation.

The difficulties besetting this process of amalgamation make people in Palestine even more impatient and less tolerant in their relation to one another than anywhere else. This is evident in all directions of life because all its manifestations are related to the goal of national restoration. As language is one of its most important instruments, the *Yishuv* is most sensitive to any sign of its neglect or disregard. The slowness with which the American legionnaires who remained in the country after the First World War adopted Hebrew was branded as "Americanism." A similar complaint we hear today about the German Jews. They are also the target of attacks in the political field because of their successful attempt to organize themselves as a party for the purpose of representation. They find this necessary because the workers among the *olim* take exception to the old spokesmen of labor on the ground that the latter are firmly entrenched in their positions and exercise too much power and influence. Many Jews come to Palestine with preconceived notions about the country and have to go through a trying period of discomfort and loneliness until

they accept it as a reality of its own and enter as full participants in its upbuilding.

The difficulties of adjustment, a frequent theme in modern Hebrew literature, confront both individuals and groups. The first Yemenites to arrive in Palestine complained not only about the lack of housing and disregard of religious tradition but even more about the utter neglect they experienced on the part of the *Yishuv*. "Not one of the farmers takes part in our joy, not one of them in our troubles. We are here like foreigners in a foreign country."

There is another phenomenon characteristic of Palestine only. No country welcomes new arrivals as Palestine does; for every newcomer swells the total and constitutes a hope. At the same time and in spite of it, there is a sort of grumbling at the "late-comer," at the "too little and too late." This is an old resentment already recorded in Talmudic times. It is told of a Talmudic scholar that he did not return the greeting of a colleague who had just come from Babylon and, instead, welcomed him with the remark: "God hates you, you Babylonians. Had all of you come at Ezra's time you would have resembled the silver over which decay has no power." In the same mood and alluding to the same verse of the Song of Songs, the Midrash expounds: "Had the Israelites come from Babylon like a wall, the temple would not have been destroyed."

The "arrival of the brother" is only a small part of the vast picture of Jewish history. For the greater part of our existence we are still directed and dominated by the superior will and power of other nations. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to study how Jews behave toward Jews, how they help, encourage and hurt each other. The story of the Jew meeting his fellow-Jew has its own moral and may eventually have a salutary effect on those concerned with our future.

Discussion in Theology

Palestinian Educators in Search of Religion

By MORDECAI M. KAPLAN

Where Jewish Scholars Have Failed

SOME day the Jewish men of learning, the scholars, the rabbis and the publicists of the last three or four generations will be hauled before the Judgment Seat of history for the scandalous way in which they have failed their people in its most dangerous spiritual crisis. It is generally assumed that their main concern in all their labors is to make it easier for the thinking Jew to remain a Jew, by helping him to understand what it is that binds him to his people. Surely, nothing could be more essential to such understanding than enlightenment concerning the place of religion in Jewish life both past and present. These men of learning have been engaged in their respective tasks for over a century. The scholars and the writers have filled whole libraries with their books, and the rabbis have to their credit miles of homiletical treatises and years of

prodigious communal labors. What they will have to explain before the Judgment Seat is how, after so much ado on their part for the good of their people, it is still possible for a situation to exist like the one reflected in a pamphlet which has come recently from Palestine.

That pamphlet contains nothing more than an innocent account of the proceedings of a "Conference on Religion," which took place in Haifa a little over a year ago. But when we read what was said at that Conference and note its meager outcome, we cannot help feeling that our Jewish spiritual elite have diverted their great abilities from the most urgent spiritual need of the Jewish people, the need of achieving a living, functioning religion for our day, and applied them to needs that were far less pressing. There can be no greater indictment of their disregard of priorities in Jewish life than the fact, which emerges from those proceedings, that they have done virtually nothing to provide religious inspiration and guidance for modern nationalist Jews. As a result of this neglect of theirs, progressive and spiritually-minded Jews who are entrusted with the training of the growing generations in Palestine are completely nonplussed when it comes to religion. That Conference was attended by people who wield a responsible educational influence in Palestine. We do not have to read between the lines to realize that they are extremely confused and helpless. As Dr. Biram, perhaps the most influential among them, said during one of the sessions, "I would not dare to discuss religion with the pupils in my own school, because I know that they would not respond."

The Conference on Religion in Palestine Jewish Education

The sixty persons who attended the Conference, which met on July 16-17, 1942, came from three different discussion groups which had been meeting frequently for a year or more previously, one in Jerusalem, the other in Tel-Aviv and the third in Haifa. These groups consist of some of the most prominent and active educators and publicists, with a sprinkling of scholars and thinkers, who are in search of a religion for the new Palestine Jewry. These people, in their belief and practice, had gotten far away from traditional religion. But, in the course of their educational endeavors, they have come to realize that a humanist or idealist philosophy of life will not suffice. Though averse to the Orthodox version of Jewish religion, they would welcome that version of Jewish religion which would reckon with the mystic yearnings, no less than with the rational demands, of the modern Jew.

The moving spirit of the Conference seems to have been Joseph Bentwich, the organizer of the Jerusalem group. Realizing the futility of mere discussion, he is eager to mobilize the progressive religious elements in Palestine into an association that would make itself felt in the inner life of Palestine Jewry, particularly in the field of education. He, accordingly, brought with him a statement of principles, on which his group had worked a long time, and to which he hoped the other two groups would give their consent. These principles were the following:

"1. We regard religion as the basis for a complete and uniform world-outlook and for the moral life of the individual and of society.

"2. It is the destiny of man in general, and of the Jewish people in particular, to sanctify (sic) religion in life. (This principle, it was pointed out in the course of the discussion, was poorly worded.)

"3. We are in duty bound to maintain our religion, the religion of Israel, both by means of the study of its principles and by means of the practice of its precepts.

"4. This duty devolves upon us, especially during this war, which is being waged, not only against life and possessions, but also against religion and morality in general. With the loss of these latter values we would lose everything."

The members of the Tel-Aviv group regarded the foregoing principles as tantamount to a return to traditional belief and practice. They wanted to limit the basis of unity to a minimum. Accordingly they proposed the organization of an "Assembly of Believers," which would be committed to the following:

"1. Belief in God as an Absolute Being, or in the spiritual element which reveals itself as the Absolute in creativity, in truth, in righteousness and in the good, all of which constitute its expressions in life.

"2. Belief in the vocation of man to foster this belief both openly and secretly, in thought and in action, in private and in public."

Slow Progress

The discussion which ensued and the papers which were read at the Conference, with the outstanding exception of the illuminating paper by Prof. Julius Guttman of the Hebrew University, betrayed a shocking superficiality and amateurishness in the understanding of religion. There were the usual drivel and sentimentalities of those who, having gotten beyond the stage of wantlessness in religion, have arrived at the stage where they do not know what they want. Nothing you offer them satisfies them. If you propose a clearer grasp of what we mean by God, they say they are not interested in metaphysics. If you suggest the working out of some ritual regimen, they charge you with foisting on them the old theurgy or magic. If you stress the dependence of ethics upon religious sanctions, they maintain they manage to lead ethical lives without the benefit of clergy.

Of course, when skilled publicists like A. Steinman, A. A. Kabak and Dov Shtok indulge in sentimentalities, they do it so charmingly that you are at first drugged by their mellifluous style. But when you come to your senses, you realize that they have been merely drugging you with beautiful metaphors. So divergent and heterogeneous were the views expressed at the Conference that those present could agree only on an amended form of the first of the four principles of the Jerusalem platform, which now reads as follows:

"We regard the Jewish religion as the basis for the life of the Jewish people as well as for the moral life of the individual and society."

That was as far as the participants in the Conference were able to get. The hoped-for merging of the three groups into an association had to be left for subsequent negotiations. Palestine Jewry still has a long way to go to make up for the failure on the part of our men of light and leading to give due recognition to the problem of religion, in general, and of Jewish religion, in particular. We should be grateful that it has at least made a beginning. The first steps are bound to be the hardest. Let us hope that this first "Conference on Religion" marks the beginning of a movement that will ultimately give rise to a living progressive Jewish religion.

[The foregoing article institutes a new department. Reconstructionism does not expect its adherents to subscribe to any particular theology. It assumes, however, that Jews who want to live Judaism as a religious civilization should be vitally interested in the problem of theology with a view to achieving for themselves some kind of religious orientation. In addition to publishing comments dealing with theology, the editors invite correspondence from readers, which they may publish in whole or in part, with or without reply.—Ed.]